TALKING BACK

Who Killed the Story?

I travel the college lecture circuit with a slide show and narration on the conspiracy behind the John Kennedy assassination. The presentation includes what I believe to be photographic proof of the conspiracy, the bootleg Zapruder film and slides from the scene in Dallas. I often lecture in distant places like Akron and Altoona and Tuscaloosa, far from the eye of the media vortex. I get interviewed by earnest young reporters from W something something or K something something, radio and TV, and what they ask is, "If everything you say is true, Mr. Katz, and we're not saying it isn't, why hasn't the media done something about it?"

Now this is a tough one for me to answer because these reporters, freshly graduated fron journalism school and inspired by the awesome deeds of Woodward and Bernstein, do not share my cynicism about the media's ability to grasp large-scale conspiracies. I carefully explain that there was no independent media investigation of Dallas like the one of Watergate, that conspiracies are often expressly designed to deceive the media and investigators (were it not for the judicial process, which was neatly sidestepped in the Oswald case, the Watergate coverup might have succeeded), and I add that in many instances the media willfully ignored the factual evidence.

This is blasphemous, heretical. I can see that I am starting to sound crazy to them. But how do I explain the full implications of a Sept. 11, 1966, New York Times article entitled, "No Conspiracy, But—Two Assassins Perhaps"?

It seems to me that the tenets of journalism prevent an understanding of the assassination question. The old who-what-when-where does not apply. Those were the pertinent questions in November, 1963. That was a bygone era of journalism when the "facts" of the assassination were spoon-fed to the media by the Dallas district attorney and J. Edgar Hoover. Now it is the Warren Commission critics who are supposed to dish out the answers

The local radio and TV want me for a quickie interview prior to my lecture. They shove the mike in front of my mouth and want to know what new evidence I have to

offer. Itry to explain that the old evidence, the research of Lane and Garrison and Weisberg, is sufficiently convincing. They smirk as if that was just a warm-up question anyway. Then they inquire, on behalf of their listeners, who was behind the murder. I give a rough outline of what is known, but stress that we don't have all the answers. Before the cameras and tapes are clicked off, I quickly interject that it matters that we don't know, that the lingering existence of this haunting question—Who killed JFK?—is radical and powerful and that my ignorance of the true assassins is all our ignorance and all our loss. But the machines have clicked. They do not hear.

Zapruder Film Evidence Distorted

Most assassination researchers agree that the Zapruder home movie of the motorcade is the best evidence of conspiracy. The film was purchased from Zapruder by Time, Inc., and they have refused to release the original. The media treatment of this basic piece of photographic evidence illustrates many of my complaints about assassination coverage. The complaints range from false reporting to journalistic squeamishness to obtuse thinking.

Though the film was never shown on television, Dan Rather did recount a description of the movie for CBS viewers in 1966, and he told of the President's violent forward motion after the impact of the head shot. Now the film is such important evidence precisely because the President jolts violently backward after the head shot, a reaction inconsistent with Oswald's alleged location to the rear. I have seen bootleg copies of the film where Rather's voice is dubbed in, and it is shocking to hear him saying "violently forward" at the exact moment the film reveals the President lurching backward.

At the New Orleans Clay Shaw trial in 1969, district attorney Jim Garrison subpoenaed the film from Time, Inc. It was shown a dozen times to the jury and the courtroom audience, which included representatives of the national media. It had a devastating effect. Reporters scrambled over to the spectators, asking for quotes on what they had just viewed. Apparently these crack jour-

nalists lacked the confidence to confor of the film. The constraints of justatement, without attribution, that the lone assassin theory. The burdedrama of the first public showing escaped unreported.

At the Politics of Conspiracy Confidence to confidenc

at Boston University, a very clear presented. The Boston Globe, wh scant attention to critics of the War gunman conclusion, reported of the later, another shot hits Kenner. Enlargements of the Zapruder second gunman on the grassy knol

This is quite an admission for major newspaper. To say the Prest front is to say that Oswald could no to admit that we do not know who admit that the *Globe* has been wron effect, however, was not that pron quotes appeared in the seventeenth on the conference. This page one began instead with a desultory ruconference participants.

But the Globe article, and a more New York Times on the conspiracy that major media may now be grud massive doubts about Dallas. I make the greated Jim Garrison's 1966 assassination was carried out by Cubans, the CIA, and high govern Cronkite pontificated on the absudisparate groups could work togaction. Certainly Watergate has be ity on the conspiracy analysis of pocorrected vision can now be focus the recent past, specifically the as Bob Katz

Bob Katz is a member of the Assassina in Cambridge, Mass.